

SOUTH HAMS FEDERATION

ACCEPTABLE PARENT / CARER BEHAVIOUR

Approved: 19.07.21

Review: July 2023

This policy can be applied to any person that engages with any of the schools within the South Hams Federation and not just to parents.

The following policy can be used whether the unreasonable behaviour is as a result on an ongoing concern or complaint which the parent has expressed about the school, or not.

Within the South Hams Federation we recognise that parents and carers are the single biggest influence on their children and their achievements. Therefore, we are committed to building positive and responsive relationships with parents and carers so that together we can ensure that our young people get the most out of their time with us.

We encourage partnerships with our parents and carers, and work hard to maintain mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for the children. However, in a very small minority of cases, the behaviour of a few parents or carers can cause disruption, resulting in abusive or aggressive behaviour towards staff and this will not be tolerated. All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place.

Schools are not public places and although parents and carers have rights to attend and enter school premises for legitimate proper purposes, The Education Act of 1996 states that it is an offence for a trespasser on school premises to cause a nuisance or disturbance. The school is entitled to withdraw the implied right a parent or carer has to enter the school, if that parent or carer is violent or aggressive. If the parent or carer then enters the premises, they are in breach of the law, and they can be prosecuted in the criminal courts.

The purpose of this policy is to provide the expectations around the conduct of all parents, carers and visitors connected to the schools within the South Hams Federation.

This code aims to clarify the types of behaviour that will not be tolerated.

The code of conduct also sets out the actions the schools within the South Hams Federation can take should this code be ignored or where breaches occur.

Behaviour that will not be tolerated: Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with a school's normal operation or activities anywhere on the school premises.

- Any inappropriate behaviour on school premises.
- Using loud or offensive language or displaying temper.
- Threatening in any way, a member of staff, visitor, fellow parent/carers or child.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Sending abusive or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communications (including social media) to anyone within a school community.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding a school within our Federation or any of the pupils/parents/staff/governors at the school within our Federation on Facebook or other sites
- The use of physical, verbal or written aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment of your own child on school premises.
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences)
- Taking photos / films of staff other parents or children on mobile devices to keep or share with others.
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on school premises. (Alcohol may only be consumed during authorised events)

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Should **any** of the above occur on any school premises within the South Hams Federation or in connection with the schools within the Federation, the schools may feel it is necessary to take action by contacting the appropriate authorities or consider banning the offending adult from entering the school premises.

It is important for parents and carers to make sure any persons collecting their children are aware of this policy.

Issues of conduct with the use of Social Media

Most people take part in online activities and social media. It's fun, interesting and keeps us connected.

Most of the PTFAs of schools within the Federation have a Facebook page which allows parents to receive and respond to messages about school events. We encourage parents and carers to positively participate if they wish.

Within these spaces however we ask parents and carers use common sense when discussing school life online.

'Think before you post' We ask that social media, whether public or private, should not be used to fuel campaigns and voice complaints against the South Hams Federation, or any of the schools within the Federation, staff, parents or children.

We take very seriously inappropriate use of social media by a parent to publicly humiliate or criticise another parent, member of staff or child.

If parents have any concerns about their child in relation to the school they should:

1. Initially contact the class teacher
2. If the concern remains they should contact the Head of School or Executive Headteacher
3. If still unresolved, the governors through the complaints procedure

They should not use social media as a medium to air any concerns or grievances.

Online activity which we consider inappropriate:

- Identifying or posting images/videos of children Abusive or personal comments about staff, governors, children or other parents
- Bringing the schools within the Federation into disrepute
- Posting defamatory or libellous comments
- Emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff or children
- Using social media to publicly challenge the Federation policies or discuss issues about individual children or members of staff
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language
- Breaching school security procedures

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Within our Federation we take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately in line with the actions outlined above.

What happens if someone ignores or breaks the code?

The Executive Headteacher will decide whether the situation has been reached for proposing an actual ban. In extreme circumstances, i.e. if the incident is considered to be very serious, then s/he can issue a short-term temporary ban immediately, if required. In cases where the unacceptable behaviour is considered to be a serious and potentially criminal matter, the concerns will in the first instance be referred to the Police. This will include any or all cases of threats or violence and actual violence to any child, staff or governor in the school

If the issue presents a less immediate threat then the Executive Headteacher will consider issuing a warning letter which says that repeats of such behaviour will likely result in a ban. Events may occur in a number of stages and it may be that upon consideration by the Executive Headteacher that a warning letter needs to be issued.

The school within the South Hams Federation will write to the parent/carer setting out:

- what has happened and why it is unacceptable
- that the school will consider banning the parent/carer from the school premises
- give a clear explanation of why the ban is proposed
- give the parent/carer 5 working days to respond in writing giving their own version of events
- state the length of the proposed ban and give a review date.

Following receipt of the written response:

- the Executive Headteacher will decide whether or not to ban the parent/carer
- the parent/carer will be informed in writing within 3 days of the decision taken
- the terms of any ban will be clear, with explicit paths of communication between the school and the parent
- pick up and drop off of children will be taken into consideration
- a date for the review will be given, which will take account of what has happened in the interim period
- if no further concerns have arisen regarding the parent's behaviour, a meeting date will be set which will seek to re-establish a productive working relationship between the school and the parent/carer

If a parent/carer wishes to appeal against a ban, they may do so in writing (following the complaints procedure). The first stage of this appeal will be undertaken by an appointed governor who would invite the Executive Headteacher to review the matter with a view to lifting the ban. If the outcome to this stage is that the ban is still in place, then the parent may appeal further to a panel of governors according to the usual complaints process.

In some cases the unacceptable behaviour is so extreme (for example, an assault on a member of staff) that the Executive Headteacher may feel that there is no alternative but to

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impose a lengthy or permanent ban. In criminal cases the Executive Headteacher should inform the police and should contact the DCC Solicitors.